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CONTENTS

The Joint Committee on African Studies of the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council commissioned the papers contained in this issue for presentation at the Twenty-seventh Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, November 1984, Los Angeles, California, as part of its continuing series of papers assessing the current state of social science and humanistic research on Africa. The *African Studies Review* welcomes the opportunity to publish these major papers for the fourth consecutive year.

ARTICLES

- A Review of African Oral Traditions and Literature
Harold Scheub 1
- Struggles for Control:
The Social Roots of Health and Healing in Modern Africa
Steven Feierman 73
- African Gnosis:
Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge
V. Y. Mudimbe 149

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